

# **Welcome to VA Long Beach Healthcare System**

## **Veteran Patient's Handbook**

You have been assigned to one of our Primary Care Teams. On the team there will be one Primary Care Provider who will be responsible for your care.

Our goal is to provide quality service in a caring atmosphere. Our clinical and administrative staff strive daily to provide treatment that is courteous, compassionate, and responsive to individual needs.

This handout is to help veterans better understand the services and medical care provided by the VA. This will identify the enclosed information.

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Revised 6/17/05 Changed grammar & updated phone numbers. Last version 4/29/05.

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I. Medical Care

**A. Routine:**

Every patient enrolled with the VA Long Beach Healthcare System will be assigned to a Primary Care Provider. Each provider is part of a team that includes a case manager, registered nurse, LVN, pharmacist, and clerical support staff. For a routine appointment, please call the phone number provided for your team. We encourage you to call for an appointment or if you have a question. Please do not just “walk in”; this will result in unnecessary delay in treating you or another patient.

**PC Alpha Team:** (562) 826-5607 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

G. Guru, M.D.

Anthony Vo, M.D.

Vanessa Lee, NP

Therese Wright, NP

Lina Mamaril, RN, Case Manager – (562) 826-8000 ext 2379

Elaine Lei, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

John Guidi, MSW, Social Worker - (562) 826-3406

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Bravo Team:** (562) 826-5105 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Nolan Cordell, M.D.

Zsuzsanna Sandor, M.D.

Rena Kaiser, NP

Janet Edwards, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3411

Elaine Lei, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

John Guidi, MSW, Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3406

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Charlie Team:** (562) 826-5136 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Despina Kayichian, M.D.

Pamela Prete, M.D.

David Webb, M.D.

Li Wen, M.D.

R. Wishnow, M.D.

Christine Chow, PA

KC Farmer, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 6705

KC Huynh, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW, Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Charlie Team:** (562) 826-5136 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Kota Chetty, M.D.

Greg Smith, M.D.

Lynn Kelley, NP

Jacquelyn Recendez, NP

Darlene Hill, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3459

KC Huynh, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW – Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Delta Team:** (562) 826-5144 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Robert Kaplan, M.D.

K. Kwak, M.D.

Khin S. Myint, M.D.

Jeannette Iturrino, NP

Nora Benzon, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3495

KC Huynh, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW – Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Delta Team:** (562) 826-5144 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Stuart Gilman, M.D.

Rolland Jenkins, M.D.

Jenny Lee, M.D.

R. Rajan, M.D.

P. Catanzaro, NP

Michael Burger, PA

Nora Benzon, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3495

KC Huynh, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW – Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Foxtrot Team:** (562) 826-5151 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Stephen Berman, M.D.

Marc Ofstein, M.D.

Gary Segal, M.D.

Anita Loos-Hannifan, NP

Joan Griffiths, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3517

Susan Sung, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW, Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

**PC Foxtrot Team:** (562) 826-5151 (appointment scheduling/cancellation)

Providers:

Diep Bui, M.D.

Lawrence Lerno, M.D.

Charles Wilson, M.D.

Toni Mandala, NP

Ann Zarkower, NP

James Black, PA

Marilyn Kujala, R.N., Case Manager - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3585

Susan Sung, Pharmacist - (562) 826-5503

Peter Lydon, MSW, Social Worker - (562) 826-8000 ext. 3082

TeleCare Nurse Advice: Toll Free - (877) 252-4866 (24 hours, 7 days)

- B. Telephone:** Call the VA TeleCare Line at 1-877-252-4866.
1. If you have a question about how you feel.
  2. If you don't feel good and don't know what to do. Is it serious?
  3. If you have a question about your medications after normal clinic hours.
  4. If you have a question about how to take care of yourself.

The VA TeleCare program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Using TeleCare is an easy way to find out if you should and can treat yourself at home, if you should see your provider, or visit an emergency room. Specially trained nurses will help you to understand what your symptoms mean or how serious they are. (A VA TeleCare Brochure is in your packet with more information on this program.)

**C. Emergency:**

1. If you feel you may have an emergency, but you are not sure, call the VA TeleCare line at 1-877-252-4866 and talk to the nurse.
2. If you know that it is an emergency, call 911.

**D. Specialist:** A referral to a specialist can only be made by your primary care provider. Once the referral has been made, you will be notified by mail of your appointment with the specialty clinic.

**E. Women Veterans Health Program:** Women's health examinations, education, counseling and mammograms are done at our medical center. Your primary care provider may refer you or you may "self-refer." If you have a question, you can call (562) 826-5633.

## **II. Medications**

**A. New Prescriptions from your provider:**

1. Please see the pharmacist located in the consultation areas (primary care clinics and pharmacy waiting area). He/she is there to talk to you about new medications that your provider has prescribed.
2. After ordered by your provider, medications can be picked up in the outpatient pharmacy located on the first floor of the medical center. The waiting time to fill your prescription is less than 20 minutes. Watch the electronic board (TV monitor) for your name; this lets you know that your prescription is ready.

**B. Refills:** If you have to take the medicine all the time, your provider can order a 90 day supply (depending on the medication) with three refills. There are three ways that you can order your refills:



**1. Telephone for a refill using the automated telephone system.**

Please call three weeks before running out of your medications (it takes this long to receive medications in the mail). The number is: (toll free) 1-888-771-8387 or 562-826-5503.

**2. Mail the refill slip.** The address is:

VA Long Beach Healthcare System (03/119)  
Pharmacy Service  
5901 E. 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Long Beach, CA 90822

**3. Visit our website:** <http://www.long-beach.med.va.gov>. Please stop by our pharmacy Self-Service Prescription Refill area (or the library) to obtain a password before you can order refills by the internet.

**If you run out of refills**, or are going on vacation and need more medication, please call 562-826-5503 and press 2 to speak with a pharmacy representative.

**C. Co-pay:** There is a \$7.00 co-payment for each 30-day (or less) supply of medicine for any condition that is non-service connected. The co-payment is for all non-service connected veterans. Please be sure to communicate with your provider to avoid unexpected or unwanted co-pay charges. Review your medications with the provider including over-the-counter medications such as aspirin that you may want to purchase yourself. Also review your medication profile with the pharmacist assigned to the clinic where you saw your provider to be sure the correct medications were prescribed for you. Medications are NOT returnable once you have received them.

**D. Co-Managed Care:**

1. If a veteran has a prescription from a non-VA provider, the prescription must also be written by a VA provider before the pharmacy can fill it.

2. The veteran must see a VA provider for evaluation (history, physical, medications). If in agreement, the VA provider will then write a prescription for the medication that can be filled by the pharmacy.

### **III. How to Get the Most from Every Visit:**

- A. Write down everything you want to talk to the provider about since it is hard to remember everything. “Doc Talk” cards are available in the clinic for this purpose.
- B. Ask questions about your condition, treatment, medications and other concerns so that you understand everything before you leave.
- C. Make a list of your medications or bring them with you so that you and the provider understand what you are taking.

### **IV. Patient Health Education and Information Center:**

- A. **The VA Long Beach Patient Health Education and Information Center** offers a variety of health information to our veterans in a comfortable atmosphere. Your provider may refer you to pick up specific information or you are welcome to stop in if you have any questions. It is located on the first floor, Bldg. 8, Rm. 101 and is open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- B. **Healthwise for Life Handbook:** We encourage you to use this book at home on a regular basis. Over 200 common health problems are listed along with information on prevention and home treatment. You will receive a copy from your provider.
- C. **The Personal Health Record** will help you and your provider make sure that you get the tests, immunizations, and guidance you need to stay healthy.
- D. **My HealtheVet:** If you have internet access, this website is for you. Health information is available from reputable sites, in addition to Research and Development news, and the Veterans Health Initiative at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov> . Using the Online Patient Services part, you can get medication information, renew your prescriptions, and check your appointments.

**V. Social Work Services:**

- A. Social Work is involved in a variety of programs and support groups in the VA, including PTSD and POW.
- B. Your primary care provider can refer you to the social worker assigned to the same team as your provider.
- C. For general information, please call:

For Alpha and Bravo Teams, John Guidi, MSW, 562-826-8000, ext. 3406.

For the Charlie, Delta & Foxtrot Teams, Peter Lydon, MSW, at 562-826-8000, ext. 3082.

If you are an inpatient, ask your nurse at the ward station or ask your doctor to refer you.

- D. If you need help with personal problems, finances, housing or transportation, a social worker is there to help you.

**VI. How to Get Mental Health Services:**

- A. The clinics provide outpatient treatment for patients suffering from emotional difficulties or psychiatric illnesses such as depression, anxiety, PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) and others.
- B. Psychiatric medications and one-to-one, group, and family therapies are available.
- D. If you would like to be evaluated or treated, ask your primary care provider to refer you to our Mental Health specialists via electronic consult or you may refer yourself by presenting yourself as a walk in patient to the PETS clinic (Psychiatric Evaluation and Treatment Services) in Building 126, Room W128. The clinic is open at 8 a.m. and closes at 5:30 p.m.

**VII. How to Get Dental Services:**

Veterans are eligible for VA dental care if they are 100% service connected or a POW. Service connected veterans with less than 100% rating may be eligible for dental care if the dental problem is affecting the service connected condition.

Veterans with certain non-service connected conditions may also receive some dental care. Please call the Health Benefits Advisor, Eligibility, at 562-826-5915 and select #1.

### **VIII. What Does Enrollment Mean to Me?**

- A. Your ID card is your passport to VA healthcare services. Carry it in your wallet and bring it each time you come to the clinic.
- B. If you move, let us know so we can make you a new card.
- C. If you have medical insurance, the VA will collect from the insurance company. Please be sure your insurance information on file is accurate.
- D. Means testing is conducted annually on certain veterans to determine whether veterans are unable to pay for medical care. The Means Testing Coordinator can be reached at 562-826-5915 and select #1.
- E. If you have any questions about enrollment or benefits, please call extension 5915 or come to the Business Office in the main lobby of the Medical Center to speak with an advisor.

**IX. Food:** There is a canteen (cafeteria) on the first floor of Building 2. Vending machines are located on the first floor by Alpha & Bravo Clinic Teams; in the Emergency Room waiting area; on the first floor, Building 1, outside next to the patio, and other areas.

**X. Gulf War Registry:** Any veteran who served in the Gulf War may be eligible for this registry. If there are conditions linked to exposure that occurred in the Gulf War, you may be eligible for compensation. A newsletter is sent to veterans on the registry to notify them about new conditions or changes in the regulations. For more information, please call Rosita Zamora at 562-826-8000 extension 2862. Building 162, Room 108.

### **XI Veterans of Operation Enduring/Iraqi Freedom with combat service time:**

If you are a discharged veteran of Operation Iraqi-Enduring Freedom, VA can provide you medical care for two years from your military discharge date for conditions you believe are related to your combat/military service, regardless of your income or eligibility status. You may contact the following for more information:

For enrollment/eligibility: Giselle Battle, 562-826-8000, ext. 3354.

For outpatient medical care: VA can provide you with healthcare and benefits assistance. Call June Callasan, R.N., Combat Veteran Case Manager at 562-826-8000 ext. 3394.

For VA benefit entitlements: Michael Ginther, VBA counselor: available Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Building 126, Rm. W217.

562-826-8000, ext. 4655

You may also call the Los Angeles Regional Benefits Office at:

310-235-6383  
800-827-1000

A **combat veteran orientation session** is also offered twice a month at VA Long Beach:

On Wednesdays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Contact: 562-826-8000, ext. 3394

## **XII. Veterans Benefits**

The VA Long Beach Healthcare System offers a wide array of services to assist our veterans in the following areas:

**Compensation and Pension Claims:** Veterans are now able to file for compensation for a service-connected disability on line. The VA also offers the guidance of Veteran Service Officers to assist you during this process. Please visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) for more information, or contact your local Veterans Service Office for more information. They are readily available to assist you at VA Long Beach, Wednesdays – Fridays, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m. in Building 126, Room W217.

**Appeal Boards:** Want to know the status of your appeal? Call (202) 565-5436. The VA is also able to provide you with representation to appeal your case, free of cost. Simply fill out VA Form 21-22 to authorize representation by a Veterans Service Officer.

**Education Benefits:** If you would like more information on eligibility for benefits or general information regarding Education Benefits, please visit the VA website at [www.gibill.va.gov](http://www.gibill.va.gov). There is a comprehensive list of frequently asked

questions, payment rate tables, and even a way to process your monthly verification of enrollment on line.

The VA is here to serve you, and we are constantly evolving our methods of service to improve customer satisfaction. If you need any assistance or would like to discuss your benefits, please contact the Veterans Service Office nearest you!

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**Veteran Patient's Notes:**